

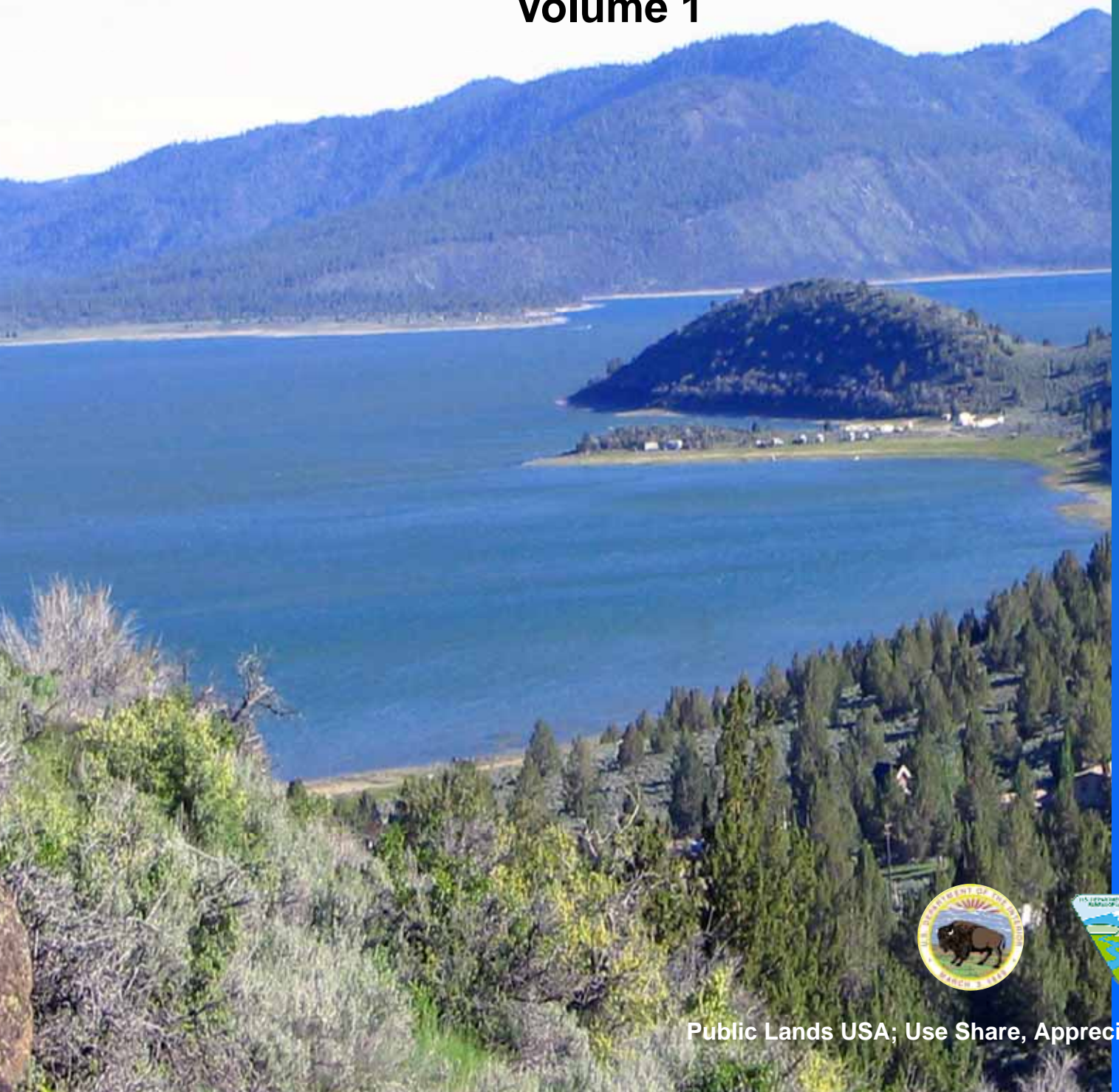
February 2006

BLM

Bureau of Land Management
Eagle Lake Field Office

Draft
Resource Management Plan and
Environmental Impact Statement

Volume 1



Public Lands USA; Use Share, Appreciate



The Bureau of Land Management *Today*

Our Vision

To enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources.

Our Mission

To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Our Values

To serve with honesty, integrity, accountability, respect, courage, and commitment to make a difference.

Our Priorities

To improve the health and productivity of the land to support the BLM multiple-use mission.

To cultivate community-based conservation, citizen-centered stewardship, and partnership through consultation, cooperation, and communication.

To respect, value, and support our employees, giving them resources and opportunities to succeed.

To pursue excellence in business practices, improve accountability to our stakeholders, and deliver better service to our customers.

BLM/CA/ES-2006-008+ 1790-1600



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Eagle Lake Field Office

2950 Riverside Drive

Susanville, CA 96130

(530) 257-0456

FAX: (530) 257-4831

www.ca.blm.gov/eaglelake

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the Draft Resource Management Plan (DRMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Eagle Lake Field Office. This document was prepared by the BLM in concert with eight cooperating agencies, as well as from public comments received during the scoping phase of this planning effort.

The geographic planning area includes BLM managed public lands within the counties of Lassen, Plumas and Sierra, California, and Washoe, Nevada. The overall intent of this RMP is to develop a comprehensive management strategy that will guide the management of public lands administered by the Eagle Lake Field Office into the future. This RMP replaces ten former land use plans into a single, unified Eagle Lake Field Office RMP.

A Reader's Guide is included to help you navigate through the chapters of this document, and is located directly after the Abstract. BLM is interested in seeking your comments on the adequacy and accuracy of all five proposed alternatives and the analysis of their respective management decisions. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS, which is the next phase of the planning process, could select various aspects of each of the alternatives as the management strategy that best meets the needs of the many resources and values being planned for in this area.

The announcement in the Federal Register that the Eagle Lake Draft Resource Management Plan and EIS is available will start a 90-day public comment period during which members of the public are encouraged to review the document and provide comments. During this period, comments may be submitted using several methods:

Written comments should be sent to:

Eagle Lake RMP Comments

Attention: Planning Coordinator

Bureau of Land Management

Eagle Lake Field Office

2950 Riverside Drive

Susanville, California 96130

E-mail comments to:

necarmp@ca.blm.gov

Comments may also be made electronically at: www.ca.blm.gov/eaglelake

Comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the BLM Eagle Lake Field Office, 2950 Riverside Drive, Susanville, California 96130, during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except weekends and holidays). All submissions from organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety. Individuals may request confidentiality with respect to their name, address, and phone number.

If you wish to have your name or street address withheld from public review, or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, the first line of the comment should start with the words "CONFIDENTIALITY REQUESTED" in uppercase letters in order for BLM to comply with your request. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. Comment contents will not be kept confidential.

BLM would like to thank our cooperating agency partners that have worked so hard to help us complete this document. They have provided support and expertise to facilitate focusing the issues and developing alternatives to help resolve the many compelling resource concerns that face the Eagle Lake Field Office. We would like to particularly recognize Lassen and Washoe Counties, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada and California State Historic Preservation Offices, and Susanville Indian Rancheria as cooperating agencies on this document. Their experience and dedication has made this a better process and BLM looks forward to continuing to work with them to complete this planning effort. We also extend thanks to those individuals and organizations that have provided extensive information and many excellent ideas that have been considered during this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dayne Barron', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dayne Barron
Field Manager
Eagle Lake Field Office

EAGLE LAKE FIELD OFFICE

DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

EAGLE LAKE FIELD OFFICE
SUSANVILLE, CALIFORNIA

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
California State Office

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Pool', is written over a horizontal line.

Mike Pool
State Director

February 2006

**EAGLE LAKE FIELD OFFICE
DRAFT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT**

[X] Draft Environmental Impact Statement [] Final Environmental Impact Statement

Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Type of Action: [X] Administrative [] Legislative

Abstract:

This Draft Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement describes and analyzes the impacts of five alternatives for managing the public lands administered by the Eagle Lake Field Office in northeast California and northwest Nevada. The alternatives provide management recommendations to guide the multiple use management of all resources. Proposed areas of critical environmental concern, suitable wild and scenic river segments, and cultural resource management areas are also recommended.

Comments:

Comments on this document are requested from all interested and/or affected agencies, organizations, and individuals. Comments must be received within 90 days of the Federal Register notice of availability. Comments being mailed must be post-marked by close of business on the 90th day.

For further information contact:

Planning Coordinator
Bureau of Land Management
Eagle Lake Field Office
2950 Riverside Drive
Susanville, California 96130
(530) 257-0456
FAX (530) 257-4831

Readers' Guide

Introduction

The Eagle Lake Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is divided into 5 chapters, and includes maps (of the planning area and the different management approaches considered), an executive summary, appendices, a glossary and acronyms list, and a bibliography.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary addresses the entire document and highlights the key issues brought forth in the planning process.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 identifies the purpose and need for the plan, defines the planning area, and explains public participation in the planning process. This chapter identifies the planning criteria used as guidelines influencing all aspects of the process. These guidelines are based on law, regulation, and policy. Also included in this chapter is a description of the involvement of state, local, federal governments and tribal agencies. The issues developed through public participation and the planning processes are described herein.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 (Description of the Alternatives) presents the various management strategies for achieving the desired range of conditions. There is also an overview of the alternatives and a description of the theme of each alternative. Five alternatives are identified with different intensities of resource uses and management directions to resolve identified conflicts and achieve the desired range of conditions. The alternatives in this Draft RMP/EIS are designed to provide general management guidance in most cases. Specific projects for a given area or resource will be detailed in future activity plans or site-specific proposals developed as part of interdisciplinary project planning or other means. These plans and processes address more precisely how a particular area or resource is to be managed and additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and documentation would be conducted as needed.

An *Alternatives Summary Table* is included in this chapter. This table provides the reader a general summary of the key management actions within the alternatives. For a complete description of each alternative, the reader must refer to the text of Chapter 2 under each resource subject.

An *Impacts Summary Table* is also included at the end of Chapter 2. This table provides the reader a comparison summary of the main adverse and beneficial impacts that would result from implementing the various alternatives.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 (Affected Environment) provides an overview of the planning area and describes the existing situation for each of the resource programs. It describes both the biological and physical components that may be affected by the alternatives. Other components of the environment that will not be affected by the proposed actions such as climate are also described. Current management direction is briefly summarized for each program.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 (Environmental Consequences) analyzes the beneficial and adverse effects of the alternatives. There are assumptions at the beginning of each specific resource programs to help guide the reader through the thought process. At the end of the analysis of each resource subject a summary of the effects is provided, along with a discussion of the cumulative effects.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 summarizes key events in the consultation and coordination process prior to and during preparation of the Draft RMP/EIS. It also lists those agencies, organizations, and individuals who were contacted or provided input into the planning process. Also listed are the technical specialists and editors who prepared this plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide direction for managing public lands within the Eagle Lake Field Office planning area and to analyze the environmental effects resulting from implementing the alternatives addressed in this Draft RMP.

The Eagle Lake Field Office includes approximately 1,022,767 acres of BLM-managed surface acres in northeastern California and northwest Nevada. The geographic area includes all BLM managed public lands within the counties of Lassen, Plumas, Sierra, California, and Washoe, Nevada. BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands it manages for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Eagle Lake Draft RMP was developed in coordination with the Alturas and Surprise Field Office RMPs to provide a consistent framework for managing public lands and resource uses in northeast California and northwest Nevada.

The RMP is being prepared using BLM's planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. An EIS is also included in this document to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1508), and requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Eagle Lake Resource Management Plan (RMP) is to provide guidance in the management of the lands and resources administered by the Eagle Lake Field Office of the BLM that will address major resource issues identified during scoping, and through internal and cooperating agency meetings. The Eagle Lake RMP is meant to be comprehensive in nature, providing guidance for management of all uses and resources administered by BLM in the planning area.

Current management direction for the Eagle Lake Field Office is contained in ten land use plans or amendments that were developed from 1973-2002. New information, changed circumstances and resource conditions since these plans were prepared require the revision of these existing plans into a single updated RMP.

Population growth from the metropolitan areas of Reno, Nevada, and Redding, California, has increased the demand for use of public lands to support community needs and to provide recreation for a variety of uses. In addition to traditional consumptive uses, public interest has expanded in uses that emphasize aesthetic values such as open space and low-impact recreational opportunities. Changes in the type of recreation uses and the demand for diversified recreational opportunities can result in conflicts between uses and resource concerns that the old land use plans were not designed to address. Concerns include how these uses affect ecosystem health; local communities; and state, regional, and tribal interests.

Vegetation communities continue to be threatened by both the encroachment of western juniper into sagebrush-grasslands and from the invasion of annual exotic grasses and noxious weeds. The number of plant and animal species recognized by California and Nevada as special-status species has increased. In addition, the decline of sage-grouse populations in the western United States has triggered BLM national, state, and local strategies with new guidance to address habitat requirements of the species.

New protocol agreements between BLM and State Historic Preservation Offices guide the protection, inventory, and conservation of cultural resources as they relate to other resources and land uses. Emphasis is being placed on finding and managing traditional cultural properties in accord with local tribes.

Planning and Scoping Process

BLM officially initiated the planning process for the Eagle Lake Resource Management Plan (RMP) with publication of a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on July 22, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 140). Issues related to resource management in the Eagle Lake planning area were assembled during the scoping process consisting of public scoping meetings, field tours, socioeconomic workshops, and interactions with federal, state, tribal, and county collaborators.

BLM hosted six public scoping meetings in August and September 2003. A total of 205 people attended these meetings. Four meetings were held within the planning area. Other meetings were held in Redding, California, and Reno, Nevada, to ensure that BLM heard the concerns of user groups residing outside the planning area. BLM also conducted a scoping meeting in the field in August 2003. A community workshop was conducted to discuss economics and social values in December 2003.

The scoping process generated 15 key issues to be addressed in the RMP. These issues, listed below, and summarized in Chapter 1, were used to develop alternatives and are addressed in other sections of the resource management plan (e.g. effects on local economies).

- 1. How should upland ecosystems be managed?**
- 2. How will forestry issues be managed, and how will forest resources be utilized?**
- 3. How will water resources be managed and utilized?**
- 4. How will visual resources be managed and preserved?**
- 5. How should riparian areas and wetlands be managed?**
- 6. How will wildland fire and prescribed fire be managed and utilized?**
- 7. How should vehicular access and travel be managed on public lands?**
- 8. How should the public lands be managed to sustain the traditional practices and traditional cultural properties of Native American cultures?**
- 9. How should the public lands be managed to meet the needs of local communities?**
- 10. How will grazing and rangelands be managed?**
- 11. What lands are available for energy and mineral development?**
- 12. What lands will be identified for retention, exchange, disposal and acquisition?**
- 13. How will recreation opportunities be managed?**
- 14. How will fish, wildlife, and special status species be managed?**
- 15. How should special resource values and special management areas be designated and managed?**

Collaboration

BLM approaches planning with community-based collaboration, in which interested groups and people—often with varied or opposing interests—work together to devise solutions with broad public support for managing BLM-administered lands. Cooperating local, state, tribal, and federal agencies have been part of the planning team for the RMPs to the fullest extent possible. During plan implementation BLM will continue partnerships with these public and local, state, and tribal governments and agencies to select high priority projects and to resolve emerging issues.

The Council of Environmental Quality defines a cooperating agency as any agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise for proposals covered by National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR 1501.6). Any federal, state, or local government jurisdiction with such qualifications may become a cooperating agency by agreement with the lead agency. The following are formal cooperating agencies for this RMP:

- Lassen County, California;
- Washoe County, Nevada;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- California Department of Fish and Game;
- Nevada Department of Wildlife;
- Nevada and California State Historic Preservation Offices; and
- Susanville Indian Rancheria.

The Northeast California Resource Advisory Council (RAC) contributed issues and reviewed goals, objectives, and management alternatives. Other groups that participated in the planning process include California Department of Forestry and Lassen National Forest.

Management Alternatives

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) developed management alternatives for the Eagle Lake Field Office Draft Resource Management Plan using input and comments from public scoping meetings, written comments, as well as from staffs of BLM and other cooperating agency partners. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations and BLM resource management planning regulations require the formulation of a reasonable range of alternatives that seek to address identified planning issues and management concerns. Each alternative must be evaluated to ensure that it would be consistent with resource goals and objectives, and current laws, regulations, and policy.

Alternatives are developed to establish a framework to evaluate the potential impacts on the planning area that might occur as a result of implemented management decisions. The five management alternatives developed for the Eagle Lake RMP are detailed in this section, including:

No Action Alternative (required by NEPA): Retains current management through guidance and direction from current policies, and existing management plans.

Alternative 1. Resource / Economic Development: Emphasizes commodity production from BLM resources in accordance with local economies and land use plans from local communities and counties.

Alternative 2. Ecosystem Restoration or Protection: Maximizes efforts to maintain, restore, or improve components of the ecosystem using natural ecosystem processes.

Alternative 3. Traditional or Historical Uses: Emphasizes traditional community uses of resources and/or emphasizes historical uses and values.

Preferred Alternative: The Preferred Alternative was “crafted” from all of the other alternatives and combines management actions from all four of the above listed alternatives. This alternative has been designed and selected to best meet the purpose and need of the plan as described in Chapter 1; and to meet desired future conditions, goals, and objectives of individual and combined resources and resource uses.

Each alternative listed above has a somewhat different concept and emphasis on how natural resources and resource uses would be managed. The Eagle Lake Draft RMP provides a detailed description of alternative management actions for 22 resource subjects. The desired future condition, goals, objectives, and management actions for each major resource area are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The highlights of management actions under the Preferred Alternative for each resource subject are listed below.

Preferred Alternative Management Actions

Air Quality

- Manage prescribed fires and wildland fire use (0–14,839 acres per year) to reduce impacts to air quality.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

- Designate and manage 19 important cultural sites as Cultural Resource Management Areas.
- Designate two archeological areas of critical environmental concern.
- Implement management plan for one National Historic Trail.

Energy & Minerals

- Manage 388,594 acres as ‘Open’ to mineral leasing under standard terms and conditions.
- Manage 1,014,361 acres as ‘Open’ to locatable minerals.
- Manage 634,002 acres as ‘Open’ to saleable minerals.

Fire Management

- The NorCal Fire Management Plan identifies aggressive, full suppression as the appropriate management response (AMR) under conditions of severe fire intensity, especially in the wildland urban interface. However, exceptions may be made where resource objectives could safely be achieved.
- Under conditions of low fire intensity, a less aggressive AMR, such as containment/confinement, would be implemented in previously identified areas likely to benefit from wildland fire use.
- Manage wildland fires using the Appropriate Management Response (AMR):
 - Full suppression AMR - 282,304 acres
 - Full range of AMR suppression options - 730,124 acres
 - Wildland Fire Use - 10,339 acres

Forestry Resources

- Manage 11,020 acres as commercial forest using a mix of silvicultural methods.
- Rehabilitate 773 forested acres burned in the Willow and Devil fires.
- Manage 1,332 acres along the Biz Johnson Trail for wildfire defense by employing commercial and pre-commercial thinning.
- Harvest trees and biomass from 1,100 forested acres per year.
- Implement fuels reduction in the Tunnison Wilderness Study Area (1,734 acres).
- Manage commercial forests in Upper Murrer Meadows for preservation of wildlife habitat and late seral stages in addition to commercial harvest.

Fuels Management

- Implement fuels treatments through prescribed fire and mechanical, chemical and biological methods to reduce build-up of hazardous fuels, provide fuel breaks, and create defensible space in communities at risk.
 - Prescribed fire – 0 - 4,500 acres per year
 - Mechanical treatment – 500 - 3,500 acres per year
 - Biological treatment – 50 - 1,500 acres per year
 - Chemical treatment – 50 - 500 acres per year

Lands and Realty

- Prioritize acquisition of lands with important resource values and to improve public access.
- Prioritize disposal of lands with no significant resource values that are difficult to manage.

Rights of Way

- Consider new major communications sites and wind energy authorizations on a case-by-case basis.
- Designate and prioritize the Alturas Transmission Line Route (Western Regional Corridor Study) as a right of way corridor.
- Avoid or exclude authorization of rights-of-way in all special designation areas.

Livestock Grazing

- Maintain livestock grazing within 54 allotments, resting 60%-80% of total allotments annually.
- Authorize 52,250 Animal Unit Months annually.
- Maintain 987,779 acres open to livestock grazing, resting 80%-90% of total grazing lands annually.
- Maintain and construct 2,000- 2,500 acres of exclosures to protect sensitive resources.
- Manage and rehabilitate existing seedings for livestock forage on 3,000-4,000 acres and prioritize new seedings on a case by case basis.
- Implement strategies to progress towards meeting land health standards.

Recreation and Visitor Services

- Manage 848,620 acres of land outside of special recreation management areas as extensive recreation areas.
- Manage three existing special recreation management areas under the provisions of their current management plans.
- Designate two new special recreation management areas totaling 108,557 acres.
- Provide accessible camping opportunities for disabled visitors at all developed campgrounds in compliance with federal law.
- Limit camping to 14 consecutive days and 28 days annually.
- Prohibit camping within 200 feet of creeks, rivers, lakes and reservoirs unless posted otherwise. Enforce additional buffers near guzzlers at the following five Lassen County wells: Butte, Shaffer, Tableland, Table Mountain, and Belfast.
- Designate 7 additional scenic byways to promote recreational sightseeing.
- Apply restrictions to energy and mineral development to protect recreation experiences.
- Close the Bizz Johnson Trail to snowmobile travel accept for emergency and administrative use.
- Acquire the Modoc Line Railroad corridor for recreational use.
- Develop a management plan for Honey Lake Valley Rim Trail and provide public access to the shoreline.
- Develop hang glider launch areas in hills north of Wendel.
- Apply Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes to all lands to provide a diversity of recreational experiences:
 - Backcountry 675,335 acres
 - Roaded Natural 109,497 acres
 - Primitive 237,953 acres

Soils

- Implement practices to promote recovery of 113,236 acres of upland soils not meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.
- Ensure all management activities result in no net loss of soil mass or productivity within the management area.
- Consumptive uses and developments would be restricted to soils which are considered unproductive or most suitable for construction purposes.
- Minimize management activities within perennial and intermittent drainages where watershed function would be adversely affected.
- Implement soil protection practices that emphasize mitigation, natural recovery and bio-engineering. Use of additional restoration practices would be employed where natural recovery efforts are not sufficient.
- Employ bio-engineering projects to improve soil condition and achieve proper functioning condition (PFC).
- Apply sediment intrusion buffer zones >50 feet around sensitive resources on a case-by-case basis.

- Implement mitigation actions to offset soil and productivity losses within the same sixth-level watershed area (conceptually 10,000 – 40,000 acres).

Special Area Designation:

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

- Designate seven new ACECs totaling 89,397 acres:
 - Eagle Lake Basin – 34,320 acres
 - Susan River – 2,495 acres
 - Pines Dunes Research Natural Area – 2,887 acres
 - Willow Creek – 2,130 acres
 - Lower Smoke Creek – 894 acres
 - Buffalo Creek Canyons – 36,515 acres
 - North Dry Valley – 10,156 acres
- Livestock grazing would be managed according to permit stipulations, allotment management plans, and ACEC management plans.
- Noxious weeds would be aggressively controlled in all ACECs.
- An approved plan of operation is required for locatable minerals in an ACEC; other restrictions may apply for leasable or salable minerals. Where ACECs overlap WSAs, further constraints on mineral activities apply under the Wilderness IMP.

Special Area Designations

Historic Trails

- Develop a management plan for 38 miles of the Nobles Emigrant Trail to include inventory, interpretation and protection.
- Initiate inventory and interpretation of six additional historic trails.
- Secure public title or access to abandoned railroad grades.
- Designate Buffalo Creek Canyons and Lower Smoke Creek as scenic and historic ACECs.

Special Area Designations

Wild & Scenic Rivers (WSR)

- Recommend portions of Upper Smoke Creek as suitable for designation as a Wild and Scenic River, with *wild* classification.

Special Area Designations

Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)

- Prioritize acquisition of land parcels within all WSAs on a willing-seller basis.
- Establish Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) primitive areas within all WSAs.
- Close 91 miles of selected routes within ROS core primitive areas.
- Construct 68 miles of non-motorized/non-mechanized routes within selected WSAs.

Travel Management

- Manage 1700 miles of GPS-inventoried routes in the field office area.
- Routes closed or not designated through this RMP or subsequent amendments would be closed and rehabilitated.
- Implement designated route network modification criteria for changes in designation, new route construction, route realignment, route closures, rehabilitation or obliteration.
- Permanently close 59 miles of routes, and implement seasonal closures at Cleghorn Access Road, Tablelands and Horse Lake Areas.
- Assign off-highway vehicle use area designations:
 - Open 419 acres
 - Limited to designated routes 760,837 acres
 - Closed 261,511 acres
- Construct up to 15 miles of new motorized routes.
- Construct 277 miles of non-motorized routes in selected special management areas.
- Manage boating on Biscar Reservoir and the Susan River for human-powered watercraft only.
- Manage boating on Round Corral and Buckhorn Reservoirs for human-powered watercraft and low speed trolling motors.

Utilities, Transportation, and Telecommunications

- Wilderness study areas would be designated as rights-of-way avoidance or exclusion zones. All proposals must meet non-impairment criteria which prohibit permanent facilities unless they are grandfathered, have valid existing rights, or provide access to private inholdings.
- Corridor width would be a minimum of 2000 feet unless adjacent to exclusion areas.

Vegetation

- Maintain vegetation alliances, associations, and ecological sites rated as “healthy”. Restore those rated as “healthy/lacking key attributes” and those rated as “at risk”.
- Grazing areas with vegetation alliances, associations and ecological sites rated as “unhealthy” would be closed until restoration is complete. Selected shrub sites would be rested from livestock grazing every two years to promote viable seed production.
- Prioritize restoration of sagebrush–steppe communities on 500 – 4000 acres/year.
- Restore native grassland communities on 50 – 100 acres/year.
- Vegetation communities encroached by invasive juniper would be treated using prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, and manual treatments. Manage to conserve juniper on sites comprised of woodland soils.
- Restore Wyoming and mountain big sagebrush ecosystems containing sage-grouse habitat.
- Use locally gathered native seed when re-seeding.

Noxious Weeds & Invasive Species

- Implement integrated weed management (IWM) procedures on all BLM lands. Review all project proposals to determine necessary IWM actions and coordinate treatment with local agencies.
- Conduct inventory of noxious weeds.
- Monitor treatment sites to determine effectiveness and effects on non-target species.
- Increase public understanding of noxious weeds and their effects through education.

Riparian/Wetland Associations

- Continue riparian photo studies to document changes in vigor and function.
- Protect riparian areas from grazing damage by constructing exclosures, fencing and alternative water sources.

Special Status Plants

- Manage all special status species habitats and populations so that BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list these species as federally threatened or endangered.
- Reduce or eliminate impacts to special status species and their habitat when conducting ground disturbing activities.
- Acquire lands from willing sellers that support unprotected populations of special status plants.
- Provide additional protection measures to 'special interest' species to prevent them from becoming listed as special status plants.

Visual Resources

- Manage all wilderness study areas as VRM Class I.
- Assign VRM Inventory Class designations to all BLM-administered lands, and manage lands according to these class requirements, to protect scenic quality:
 - VRM Class I 0 acres (WSAs not listed to avoid duplication of acres)
 - VRM Class II 507,843 acres
 - VRM Class III 442,028 acres
 - VRM Class IV 72,896 acres

Water Resources

- Achieve measurable progress toward proper functioning condition (PFC) or desired future condition (DFC) on 37 miles of perennial and intermittent streams and 59 acres of riparian/wetland areas.
- Implement restorative measures to improve water quality and progress toward meeting state standards. Emphasize natural recovery processes, grazing exclosures, planting of woody riparian vegetation and construction of in-stream structures.
- Uses will not be restricted as long as they do not impede the restoration of state water quality standards or riparian health objectives.
- Prioritize restoration efforts on Smoke, Shoals, Cottonwood and Red Rock Creeks.
- Maintain existing water sources and manage to promote wildlife habitat, improve distribution of livestock and wild horses, and provide for recreational uses.

- Prioritize development of new water sources to extend seasonal water availability for wildlife, and to benefit desired ecosystems.
- Withdraw state-appropriated water rights on waters that are not 'waters of the state'.
- Assert in-stream flow rights in Nevada and riparian rights in California on all perennial and important intermittent streams.
- Projects that involve inter-basin transfer of water would be coordinated with local and regional governments.

Wild Horses and Burros

- Manage wild horses within three established herd management areas (HMAs), on 828,569 acres.
- Conduct censuses on at least one of three HMAs annually.
- Prioritize selection of animals returned to BLM-administered lands after gathers based on historical traits.
- Maintain populations within established appropriate management levels (AMLs) by conducting regular gathers.
- Conduct fertility research and control to assist in maintaining populations at AMLs.
- Develop facilities for public viewing, education and wild horse adoptions.

Wildlife and Fisheries

Federally Listed Species

Carson Wandering Skipper

- Conduct surveys to determine habitat suitability and cooperate as a partner in recovery plans.

Bald Eagle

- Conduct population surveys and implement seasonal protection measures.
- Develop GIS information system for nesting, roosting and foraging areas.
- Manage suitable forest habitat to retain potential nest trees.

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

- Cooperate with California Department of Fish and game on local planting of hatchery stock and related habitat issues.

Yellow Billed Cuckoo and Oregon Spotted Frog

- Contribute to survey efforts and develop action plan if populations are found on BLM administered lands.

Wildlife and Fisheries

State and BLM Listed Sensitive Species

- Cooperate with partners to obtain information on species occurrence, abundance and distribution. Develop a GIS database to document and track information.
- Manage suitable habitat to retain forest characteristics for California Spotted owls.

Wildlife and Fisheries**Ungulates**

- Control cheatgrass, invasive juniper and noxious weeds to improve habitat conditions.
- Use plantings, seedings, willow thinning and other vegetation treatments to maintain and improve terrestrial and aquatic habitats.
- Develop GIS system to manage information for habitat use areas, herd management areas and hunting zones
- If Rocky Mountain elk populations become established in the field office area, coordinate with state wildlife agencies and other partners, including livestock operators, to develop and implement management plans.
- Upon voluntary surrender of local domestic sheep grazing permits, coordinate with state wildlife agencies and other partners to develop a reintroduction plan for California bighorn sheep.

Wildlife and Fisheries***Sagebrush Ecosystems and Sagebrush Obligate Species***

- Implement the *Conservation Strategy for Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Ecosystems within the Buffalo-Skedaddle Population Management Unit*.
- Reduce invasive juniper and noxious weeds, implement seasonal protection measures and buffer zones, and timber and fuels treatments to maintain and improve habitat.
- Avoid practices that permanently convert sagebrush habitat to non-native grassland or agricultural land.

Wildlife and Fisheries***Other Native Wildlife Species***

- Manage migratory birds in accordance with the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Migratory Bird Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*.
- Follow BLM policy, guidelines, current conservation plans, memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and best management practices (BMPs) in the management of species and habitats.
- Coordinate reintroductions, augmentations and translocations of native species with state wildlife agencies.
- Build brush piles for upland game birds where cover is insufficient.
- Develop 'watchable wildlife' opportunities and develop interpretive programs.

Wildlife and Fisheries***Native and Non-Native Fish and Aquatic Species***

- Improve streams and springs not in proper functioning condition (PFC), and maintain native fish-bearing streams in proper water quality and riparian function.
- Restore and rehabilitate streams by maintaining or improving minimum pool depths, increasing clean spawning gravels and stabilizing stream banks.
- Coordinate with state agencies when implementing management actions, including the planting of fish in suitable waters.
- Coordinate with local county fish and game commissions and sportsmen's groups to determine management priorities and enhancement opportunities.

Wildlife and Fisheries

Non-Native Terrestrial Species

- **Manage, control or eliminate non-native species in cooperation with state plans and other applicable conservation plans.**

Environmental Consequences

The potential environmental consequences (or impacts) of the five alternatives were analyzed for each natural resource, resource use, and social and economic conditions. Detailed descriptions of the direct and indirect impacts of resource management under all five alternatives are provided in Chapter 4, along with a discussion of the possible cumulative impacts that could result from actions taken in this RMP. A comparison summary of these impacts is described in the Impacts Summary Table in Chapter 2.

The Preferred Alternative would enhance the ability of BLM to achieve the purpose and need of this document, as outlined in Chapter 1, as well as meet desired future conditions, goals and objectives of specific resources as outlined in Chapter 2. Alternatives 1, 3 and No Action lack the degree of management emphasis required to restore degraded sagebrush steppe communities and habitats, in relation to the encroachment of juniper.

The Preferred Alternative would result in overall minor to moderate adverse impacts to resources, and these impacts would continue to be mitigated. Management actions under the Preferred Alternative would result in moderate to major beneficial impacts to native vegetation communities from restoration efforts, and the use of prescribed fire to remove invasive juniper. Improvements to riparian areas, water bodies, and other special habitats would improve soil and water resources, and wildlife habitat. The designation of seven areas of critical environmental concern, one wild and scenic river, and an increased emphasis on cultural resource protection and management would have beneficial impacts to these important and unique resources.

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